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Policy Plan

Introduction

West Saint Paul's Policy Plan has been written to provide a set of general objectives and guidelines meant to direct the City in its planning, zoning and capital investment decisions. The Policy Plan is comprised of a series of goals and policies. Community goals are generally defined as the objectives or end products that a City hopes to achieve through local decision making. These broad objectives are usually community-wide and describe an optimum social and physical environment. Policies are the means by which the goals are achieved. They are more detailed, providing guidelines for specific decision alternatives.

Due to the diversity of land uses in the City, achieving a measure of community harmony will require a careful balancing of the policies underlying local decisions with successful communication of common goals. The goal is rooted in preservation, to the greatest extent possible, the essence of a diverse community. The objective is to blend the local variety of lifestyles into a peaceful and prosperous coexistence by creating mutual compatibility of local land uses within the community.

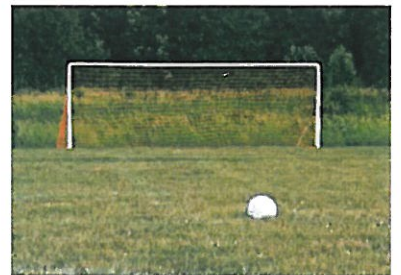
The future physical, social and economic decisions that will be made by the City require an overall policy direction, a means to implement these lifestyle options. The following goals and policies form the rationale for local decision making.



5.1 Community Goals

It is a Policy Statement of West Saint Paul to insure a safe, pleasant and economic environment for residential, commercial, industrial and public activities and to promote the general welfare of the citizens of West Saint Paul.

- To provide a variety of experiences and opportunities for residents in terms of living, working and recreational activities.
- To include all residents, business owners and customers in developing and redeveloping lands wisely to serve citizens effectively.
- To enhance and strengthen public services and amenities, such as parks, trails, and community centers, with attention to aesthetic features such as streetscapes and signage.



- To attain and maintain a secure tax base consisting of high quality residential, commercial and industrial properties.
- To provide, maintain and enforce standards for development/redevelopment which will enhance public health and promote a high quality standard of living.
- Maintain and provide quality public amenities and a safe living environment for all residents.
- To actively encourage and utilize citizen participation in the local decision-making process.
- To protect both the general welfare and the individual choices of the citizens of West Saint Paul.
- To maximize public service efficiencies through effective planning and management practices.
- Encourage sustainable development and best management practices to protect the environment for future generations.
- Advocate and support with municipal investment a safe, high quality visual environment throughout the City and particularly along major transportation corridors.
- Preserve historical, natural and cultural resources.
- Continue municipal investment that enhances community pride of place.
- To effectively utilize technology and education resources as tools in achieving this vision.

5.2 General Land Use

Goals

- To set adequate standards for the protection of health, safety and welfare of City residents and businesses.
- To encourage and support a diversity of compatible non-residential land uses that are accessible and responsive to the needs of West Saint Paul and adjacent communities.
- To maintain and enhance West Saint Paul's image as a distinct and livable community.

Policies

1. The City shall keep the community informed through a variety of outlets, including local newspapers, mailings, and City website, as to decisions on land use, community

facilities, and City policy, as these decisions are being made.

2. The City will enforce measures to protect against and minimize conflicts of land use.

5.3 Residential Development

Goals

- To provide safe and quality housing for all people, regardless of age, income or ethnic background.
- To provide a variety of housing alternatives for the residents of West Saint Paul.
- Redevelop the housing supply to meet diverse needs while maintaining the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

Policies

1. The City will encourage housing alternatives which serve a full complement of life-cycle needs to residents.
2. The City of West Saint Paul will support all reasonable means to encourage the provision of modest cost housing within the context of preserving and enhancing the City's significant natural environmental resources and providing a quality built living environment.

5.4 Commercial Development

Goals

- To encourage development which will serve the full range of commercial needs of local residents.

Policies

1. Provide for continued commercial development along and in proximity to Robert Street and for neighborhood centers at key locations within main living areas of the City. Minimize the number of private access points to Robert Street from adjacent commercial development to the extent possible.
2. Prohibit strip commercial development along other arterial and collector streets within the City so as to preserve such streets for traffic movement, to minimize safety hazards

and traffic congestion, and to preserve a high quality residential environment.

5.5 Industrial Development

Goals

- To encourage quality development that will enhance the local tax base and provide expanded employment opportunities for residents.

Policies

1. All industrial activity should be located on or with reasonably close access to a principal arterial road.
2. All new industrial development should be located in industrial parks.
3. 5% of City land should be maintained for industrial use as shown on the Plan map.

5.6 Parks/Open Space Development

Goals

- To provide for a system of parks and open spaces which will satisfy recreational needs of all citizens.
- To preserve significant open spaces and natural areas.
- To improve and expand the City trail system to enhance enjoyment of local natural features.

Policies

1. Neighborhood Park facilities should be developed so that all residential areas of the City are adequately served.
2. Community Playfields for organized sports should be provided where possible.
3. The City should coordinate with regional and County Park, trail and open space plans.
4. The City should locate and develop parkland to take maximum advantage of local natural features or existing infrastructure amenities.

5. All public parks and open spaces shall be improved in accordance with a Long-Range Capital Improvement Program (to be developed).
6. Encourage the continued use of school recreation facilities for City as well as school purposes.
7. The City should expand the local trail system, taking advantage of in-place natural feature amenities.
8. Support the North Urban Regional Trail for hiking and biking through West Saint Paul.
9. Encourage the North Urban Regional Trail alignment to interconnect Sibley High School, Dodge Nature Center, Garlough Park and Thompson Park.
10. Encourage the provision of "community" and "neighborhood" trails to provide access to park, school and other public and commercial services, and to provide hiking and biking recreational opportunities

5.7 Natural Environment

Goals

- To protect, enhance and restore the natural environment through sound land stewardship practices in order to maintain a proper balance between human and environmental qualities.
- To preserve significant open spaces and natural systems.

General Policies

1. The City's significant natural resources shall be preserved for their functional value and for their potential positive impact upon proximate urban development.
2. Urban development shall be encouraged in such a manner that it preserves the City's significant environmental resources and maximizes their positive impact upon such urban development.
3. The natural environment shall be protected to preserve ecologically sensitive and scenic areas.
4. Land uses should not be allowed which degrade the quality of the air, ground or surface water below acceptable environmental standards.
5. The City shall encourage sustainable and "green" building development practices that minimize negative impacts on

the natural environment and conserves valuable resources.

Surface Water Policies

1. The City's Surface Local Water Management Plan shall be strictly adhered to.
2. DNR shoreland management regulations shall be adopted and enforced by the City of West Saint Paul for Thompson Lake.
3. Wetlands shown on the Wetlands Map shall be preserved for their functional and environmental value.
4. Wetlands shall be considered an integral part of the City's storm water drainage system. Alteration for ponding purposes may be permitted, but should be accomplished in such a manner that wildlife habitat is preserved and/or strengthened.
5. When areas in proximity to designated public waters/wetlands are proposed for urbanization, detailed site plans should be required to demonstrate how the resource will be protected from potential negative effects.
6. Temporary storage areas, retention basins or natural swales scattered throughout developed areas should be encouraged so as to reduce peak flows, erosion damage and construction costs.
7. Water quality should be protected by adoption and adherence to:
 - a. The City's Local Surface Water Management Plan
 - b. MDNR Statewide Standards for Management of Shoreland Areas.
 - c. MPCA "Best Management Practices" as outlined in Protecting Water Quality in Urban Areas.
 - d. Utilizing National Urban Runoff Program standards for new stormwater ponds.
8. The City will continue to monitor new development proposals and require whatever means are necessary and feasible to adequately accommodate storm water runoff.

Woodland/Steep Slope Policies

1. Concentrations of wooded land with an 18% slope or greater shall be preserved in its natural state for environmental value, particularly to deter soil erosion on the steep slopes.
2. Urbanization within woodland areas of less than 18% slope shall be sensitively designed so that the overall woodland effect is preserved.
3. Detailed site plans shall be required for areas within proximity to woodlands to assure that potential negative impacts are minimized.
4. Erosion protection and soil conservation measures should be required for all new development, including:
 - a. The drainage system should be constructed and operational as quickly as possible during construction.
 - b. Where the topsoil is removed, sufficient arable soils should be set aside for re-spreading over the developed area. The soil should be restored to a minimum depth of four (4) inches and should be of a quality at least equal to the topsoil quality prior to development.
 - c. When soil is exposed, the exposure should be for the shortest feasible period of time so as to minimize sheet and gully erosion.

5.8 Community Facilities

Goals

- To provide a basis for developing and maintaining a sound financial planning program for capital improvements and relating those improvements to need, location and proper timing.
- To avoid unnecessary cost, duplication and inefficiency in providing needed facilities and services.
- To provide for efficient and effective administrative services which will meet the needs of the City of West Saint Paul.

Policies

1. The City should utilize existing infrastructure and in-place systems to maximize cost efficiencies in development of public projects.

2. Multiple use of public facilities should be encouraged in order to provide for economy in government and to make the best use of these facilities.
3. All public buildings should be located on a site of sufficient size for the buildings and should have adequate space available for any accessory facilities or expansion.
4. The City should coordinate public infrastructure improvements and services with State, County, and/or neighboring communities.
5. The City will provide adequate staff to administer the statutory requirements for the City's various operations, including: fiscal control, code enforcement, supervision and maintenance of its roads and right-of-way system, supervision, maintenance and operation of its sanitary sewer system and public water system, buildings and supervision and maintenance of its public parks and playgrounds.

5.9 Public Safety

Goals

- To protect the health and safety and welfare of the residents of West Saint Paul through efficient and effective public safety systems.

Policies

1. Multiple-use of public facilities should be encouraged in order to provide for economy in government and to make optimum use of these facilities.

Fire and Rescue Policies

1. The City will continue to maintain and support local professional police and fire departments.
2. The City Police Department and South Metro Fire is encouraged to adopt a program of vehicle replacement and reconditioning for its fire and rescue operations.
3. The City and South Metro Fire will encourage and support continuing fire prevention and neighborhood safety educational programs for local residents.

Public Works Policies

1. The City should provide and maintain a system of street lighting, maintenance, cleaning and snow removal, mowing and weed control, boulevard tree planting and trimming, and street signs.
2. The City shall provide for inspection of construction and redevelopment of structures as well as enforcement of health regulations.
3. The City should continue the street and lighting improvement program.

5.10 Transportation

Goals

- Manage the existing transportation system so as to improve accessibility and the quality of life for all West Saint Paul residents and businesses.
- Emphasize and encourage alternate forms of transportation.
- Encourage and facilitate the preservation and development of a transportation infrastructure that provides a high degree of safety and accessibility for destinations in and around West Saint Paul.

Policies

1. Strengthen coordinated transportation efforts with other communities in the metropolitan area that enhance and reinforce the location advantages of West Saint Paul as a regional center.
2. Work with the Metropolitan Council to determine future transit services consistent with the municipality's transit market area and its associated service standards and strategies.
3. Pursue an improved transportation system for better accessibility.
4. Support County and State access spacing guidelines that limit access on roadways based on their functional classification.
5. Require the appropriate dedication of public rights-of-way and restrict access along collectors and arterials based on functional classification and access guidelines.

6. Address increased parking and highway demands through travel demand management (TDM) and other means to reduce congestion. Selective capacity or safety improvements may be needed.
7. Encourage land use development that supports transit, such as concentration of higher density development along transit routes.
8. Coordinate routing and schedules with adjacent cities.
9. Provide for a range of transportation modes and opportunities including transit, auto, pedestrian and bicycles.
10. Promote safe and efficient transit travel and transit-oriented development.
11. Encourage the development and preservation of transportation connections with neighboring communities.
12. Encourage the development and use of alternative methods of transportation.
13. Minimize the traffic impacts of vehicles using parking areas.
14. Initiate safety and capacity improvements where appropriate.
15. Address Robert Street improvements as envisioned in the Robert Street Renaissance Plan and Transit Corridor Study.

5.11 Bicycle/Pedestrian Systems

Goals

- Manage and enhance existing sidewalk and trail systems so as to improve accessibility and the quality of life for all West St. Paul residents.

Policies

1. Develop a city-wide system of bike and pedestrian trails/sidewalks and facilities that are functional, attractive, safe and accessible.
2. Encourage sidewalks and trails along arterials to enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

3. Continue to work with Dakota County in developing the county wide Regional Trail Plan.
4. Enter into partnership with the Active Living Dakota County Initiative.

5.12 Economic Development

Goals

- To promote local business and industry in order to increase the local tax base, increase local employment, and provide a full range of goods and services to West Saint Paul's citizenry.

Policies

1. Encourage development that is self-supporting and broaden the local tax base.
2. Manage development in a manner that will not harm the residential character of West Saint Paul.
3. Maintain commercial districts that sustain specific types of development which act to diversify and stabilize the local economic base.
4. Encourage diverse, high-quality development that meets the needs of all residents.
5. The City should cooperate with developers and industry employers to accommodate a broad range of commercial and industrial growth.
6. The City should encourage quality commercial and industrial development design using compact development patterns when possible.
7. The City should work to minimize land use conflicts that would unduly impede commercial and industrial growth in areas planned for those uses.
8. The City shall continue its effort to effectively redevelop and beautify the community.

5.13 Solar Access

Goals

- The main concern of communities relative to providing for solar energy use is to assure access to direct sunlight for

potential solar energy systems. Local planning and land use controls can help assure such access. The purpose of this section of West Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan is to establish a commitment to assure access to direct sunlight where desired.

Policies

1. The City of West Saint Paul supports the development of solar energy systems as an alternative or supplement to the use of fossil fuels.
2. Variances from setback regulations will be considered where necessary to provide solar access.
3. New developments will be encouraged to accommodate both passive and active solar energy systems and to give special attention to street, lot and building orientation.

5.14 Historic Preservation

Goals

- To preserve the historical and cultural resources of the City's natural and structural heritage.

Policies

1. The City should assist in efforts to preserve historical sites and buildings.
2. The City should utilize State, County and private historic preservation resources to preserve and/or restore historic building sites.

5.15 Implementation

Goals

- To efficiently and effectively prepare for and manage the various systems of the City so as to insure the general health, safety and welfare of residents.

Policies

1. The City shall implement its Comprehensive Plan complete with its Land Use Guide Plan which shall be enforced by the Zoning Ordinance and official zoning map, subdivision regulations, building code, sewage disposal regulations, and other City documents.
2. Close cooperation between the City, the County, and adjacent municipalities should guide future development decisions.
3. The City will prepare and annually update a Capital Improvement Program to ensure accuracy and fiscal accountability in managing City government.
4. The City will continue to demonstrate economic responsibility in preparing the annual budget.
5. When a rezoning request departs from the land use shown on the Land Use Guide Plan, it should be objectively evaluated as a possible alternate use. Approval or denial of such rezoning should be based on: the size of the area being planned (a large, well designed development may warrant a departure from the Guide Plan); the probable impact of the alternate development on surrounding properties (health, welfare, safety and aesthetics) as compared to the Land Use Guide Plan use; and compliance with the policy framework.
6. The City should utilize local papers and other available media to keep local citizens informed on City policies and activities.
7. The City should encourage citizen participation and volunteerism to receive input and inform local citizens of planning related matters and the local decision-making process.
8. The Land Use Guide Plan and Zoning Ordinance should be periodically reviewed at a minimum of every 5 years and updated to maintain its effectiveness in accordance with the changing needs of the City.
9. All rezoning and development proposals should be evaluated in light of West Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan.